

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1, and add new claims 17-19, as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for producing modified gum arabic, the method comprising the step of heating dried gum arabic having a loss-on-drying of not more than 3%,

wherein the gum arabic to be heat treated has an average particle diameter of not more than 1.5 mm;

the gum arabic is heated at a temperature of 90°C to 180°C ~~and at a reduced pressure~~.

Claims 2-6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Original): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, wherein gum arabic to be heat treated is spray-dried.

Claim 8 (Original): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, wherein discoloration is suppressed and emulsifying ability is increased in the modified gum arabic.

Claim 9 (Original): Modified gum arabic, which is obtained by a production method of Claim 1.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): An emulsifier, comprising as an active ingredient a modified gum arabic obtained by a production method of Claim 1.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): A method for preparing an emulsion, wherein a modified gum arabic obtained by a production method of Claim 1 is used as an emulsifier.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn): The method for preparing an emulsion according to Claim 11, wherein the emulsion is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oil-based flavorings, oil-based colorants, fat-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): An emulsion, which is prepared by a preparation method of Claim 11.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): The emulsion according to Claim 13, which is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion containing, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oil-based flavorings, oil-based colorants, fat-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): Use of a modified gum arabic obtained by a production method of Claim 1 for preparing an emulsifier.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): Use of a modified gum arabic obtained by a production method of Claim 1 for preparing an emulsion.

Claim 17 (New): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, wherein the gum arabic is heated at a temperature of 100°C to 150°C.

Claim 18 (New): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, wherein the gum arabic is heated at a reduced pressure.

Claim 19 (New): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 17, wherein the gum arabic is heated at a reduced pressure.